

**James Knox Polk to Andrew Jackson, March 17, 1845,
from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by
John Spencer Bassett.**

class=MsoNormal>PRESIDENT POLK TO JACKSON.

Washington, March 17, 1845.

Confidential

My Dear Sir: I have been much gratified to receive several letters from you since I reached Washington. I have intended repeatedly to write to you, but have been almost overwhelmed with business and company. I knew too that I had nothing special to communicate which you would not learn through other sources. Genl. Armstrong left for home last evening. I had a full conversation with him and he can give you some idea of the difficulties which I had to encounter in forming my cabinet and since that time. So far I am pleased with my cabinet. They are harmonious and united, and what is of great importance as I think, working men, and are devoting themselves to duties of their respective stations. I have as yet made no removals. The Senate will adjourn on to-morrow or the next day, when I will have more time to determine upon the changes proper to be made. There must necessarily be many of them, but I must have time to examine each one well, and to be sure that when I make a removal, I put a better man in his place. I have between one and two hundred nominations to make during the Executive Session of the Senate to fill existing vacancies. In making them, I have been compelled to act upon very short notice and imperfect information, and it will be strange if I should not make some mistakes. If I have I will hereafter correct them. You will readily see how it happened that so many vacancies existed requiring immediate action. Near one hundred of Mr. Tyler's nominations were not acted upon by the Senate. The terms of many officers expired

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during the early part of this month, and were required to be filled during the Session of the Senate.

The rumour which you heard that *Col. Laughlin* was to take charge of the *Madisonian*, and make it the Government organ, was without the slightest foundation. No such thing was thought of. General Armstrong will explain to you the difficulties about a Government organ, as also my views and wishes. There is at present no paper here which sustains my administration for its own sake. The *Globe* it is manifest does not look to the success or the glory of my administration so much as it does to the interests, and wishes of certain prominent men of the party, who are looking to succeed me in 1848. The arrangement which above all others I prefer would be that, the owners of the *Globe*, would agree to place it in the hands of a new Editor, still retaining the proprietorship of the paper if they choose. You may rely upon it, that without such an arrangement, the Democratic party, who elected me, cannot be kept united three months. If *Majr. Donelson* would take charge of the Editorial Department, all the sections of the party would be at once reconciled and satisfied. If *Majr. Donelson's* object is to make money, there is no other position so desirable for him for a year or two at least, as the one I suggest. It is proper that I should speak plainly to you. If Blair continues at the head of the *Globe*, and it shall be understood to be the Government organ, it is certain that the administration will be in a minority from that moment. Blair and his paper are so identified with certain men of the party, and has incurred the hostility of certain other men of the party to such an extent, that it is impossible, for him to command the support of the whole party. He would with almost certainty be defeated for public printer in the next Congress, though there might be a large majority of Democratic members. I would not injure him pecuniarily or in any other way, for my feelings are not unkind to him. If he looks to his true interest he would desire to make such an arrangement as I suggested, and yet I fear he is disinclined to do so. If he will not, the safety and the success of my administration, will in my judgment make it indispensable that I should have a new organ, and that at a very early day. *Majr. Donelson* or Mr. *Ritchie* are the only men in the country, who now occur to me that I would

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be willing to have at the head of the Government organ. I cannot go into further details or explain to you other difficulties which surround the subject. I feel that my administration is at this moment defenceless so far as the public press here is concerned. I find myself very much in the condition which you were, early in your administration, when you found it to be necessary to supercede the Telegraph by establishing the Globe. I refer you to Genl. Armstrong for full information. As to the *Madisonian* or *Constitution*, they are not to be thought of, for a moment as the Government organ. Either the Globe must surrender the Editorial Department to another or a new paper must be established. What Majr. Donelson's inclinations might be I have no means of knowing. If with a mind to place himself in entirely easy circumstances pecuniarily, he were willing to take the position here for two years, I could at the end of that time probably gratify his wishes, in desiring to continue in the Diplomatic service. I have heard within a day or two, a rumour that Mr. *Ritchie* might be willing to come here. It is probable that he would only agree to do so, upon a friendly understanding with Blair, as I know they are friends. My object is only to explain the state of things, and not harrass you or trouble you. I thought it proper that you should understand the difficulties. With my prayers for the continu[ance] of your life and improved health, I am as ever, Very sincerely Your friend